


TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN *OLD OLD STORY*:
INTENSIFICATORY REPETITION IN ENGLISHBy VICTORINA GONZÁLEZ-DÍAZ 
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ABSTRACT

The present paper explores the synchronic distribution and historical development of an intensificatory construction that has so far received little attention in previous literature on English; i.e. what Huddleston and Pullum (2002) label as INTENSIFICATORY REPETITION (e.g. *old old story*, *long long way*). Synchronically, the paper records the existence of two functional subtypes of repetitive intensification (affection and degree) and expands previous accounts by showing the functional versatility of the degree intensificatory subtype. At the diachronic level, the paper dates the establishment of (degree) intensificatory repetition to the Late Modern English (LModE) period. It also suggests that (a) intensificatory affection was the first repetitive (sub)type to develop in the language, and (b) that its collocational expansion from Early Modern English (EModE) onwards may have paved the way for the establishment of its degree intensification counterpart.

More generally, the paper shows that formulaic phraseology can contribute to the development of fully productive constructions and advocates the need for further study of ‘minor’ intensificatory constructions (such as the one explored here) and the way in which they may help to refine current standard descriptions of the English Noun Phrase.

1. INTRODUCTION

Intensification in the English Noun Phrase has been typically associated with patterns involving degree adverbs as modifiers of gradable adjectives (e.g. *very happy* / *really sweet boy*; see Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 572ff; Quirk et al. 1985: 1239). Recent functional-structural models of the NP however show that the concept of intensification is far from univocal and that, within the NP, other elements can also perform intensificatory functions (cf. the case of REINFORCERS such as *pure bliss* / *a terrible bore* / *utter madness*; Ghesquière 2014: 17, 50ff; Paradis 2000: 233; Vandewinkel & Davidse 2008). In the same vein, Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 561–2) briefly comment on two intensificatory constructions involving the syntactic juxtaposition of attributive adjectives; i.e. what they label as INTENSIFICATORY TAUTOLOGY (e.g. *great huge boxes* / *tiny little bird*) and INTENSIFICATORY REPETITION (e.g. *long long way*).

This case-study focuses on one of these intensificatory options, namely, Huddleston & Pullum’s (2002: 561) intensificatory repetition (e.g. *a big big box*, *an old old story*).¹ Probably because of its (relative) low frequency in the language, the attention that intensificatory repetition has received in previous literature is scarce, previous accounts often being limited to

¹ For research on intensificatory repetition, see, for instance, Matthews (2009; 2014).

mentioning specific aspects of its synchronic distribution (e.g. the type of adjectives that tend to enter the construction or its distribution across registers).

This paper adopts a corpus-based, diachronic standpoint in order to provide a comprehensive account of the functional behaviour of intensificatory repetitive patterns in Present-day English and explore their establishment in the history of English. More generally, the paper shows the importance of affective intensification in processes of variation and change in the English Noun Phrase (NP) premodifying string and the role of formulaic language (terms of address in particular) in the development of productive language patterns.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 summarises previous literature on syntactic (intensificatory) repetition. Section 3 describes the methodology used in the study. Section 4 is devoted to an analysis of intensificatory (adjective) repetition both synchronically (4.1) and diachronically (4.2–4.5). In Section 5, the results of these analyses are interpreted in the light of well-known processes language change (especially grammaticalisation and subjectivisation), whereas the implications of the study for further research on the English NP are described in Section 6.

2. INTENSIFICATORY REPETITION: PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Some terminological clarifications are due before proceeding further with the investigation. The terms REDUPLICATION and REPETITION have been commonly used in previous literature to describe syntactic patterns similar to the ones explored here. In its strict sense, reduplication denotes a morphological process whereby two phonological or morphological formatives are partially or totally replicated to convey purely grammatical meanings (e.g. number, tense, aspect, transitivity etc.; cf. Haspelmath 2002: 274; Rubino 2005: 19). Instances where the formal iteration applies (as in our case) across word and/or phrasal constituents are considered instances of repetition. Terms such as SYNTACTIC REPETITION (Wang 2005), LEXICAL CLONING (Huang 2015) or IDENTICAL CONSTITUENT COMPOUNDS (Finkbeiner 2014; Hohenhaus 2004) are used to refer to syntactic iterative types. Gill (2005: 31ff) nevertheless notes with insight that the boundaries between morpho-phonological (i.e. reduplicative) and syntactic (i.e. repetitive) phenomena should be conceptualised as a continuum where concomitances between the two types are to be observed (see e.g. constructions such as *bella bella* or *così-così* in Italian; Rossi 2011: 155; Wierzbicka 1986: 296). These concomitances have probably motivated other scholars' broad(er) understanding of the term reduplication, i.e. one where it is applied to both morpho-phonological and lexico-syntactic phenomena. Note, in this respect, the use of the terms SYNTACTIC REDUPLICATION or CREATIVE TOTAL REDUPLICATION to refer to non-morphological repetitive patterns such as *adagio, adagio; coffee-coffee* or *petit petit [chat]* (Rossi et al. 2015: 351; Wierzbicka 1986). In this paper, the term INTENSIFICATORY (SYNTACTIC) REPETITION will, together with INTENSIFICATORY (ADJECTIVE) REPETITION, be used to refer to the structure that interests me here (e.g. *long long way/ big big house*).

Moving now from terminological to analytical matters, syntactic repetition has elicited the attention of scholars interested in morpho-syntax and, especially, pragmatics (see e.g. Mattiello 2013; Merlini-Barbaresi 2008; Rossi 2011; Rossi et al. 2015; Wierzbicka 1991). Syntactic repetition is pragmatically a marked option: the juxtaposition of two tokens of the same lexical element renders the structure superficially uninformative (i.e. it flouts Grice's Quantity Maxim). However, the propositional form of the single utterance is altered by the repetition, as the 'extra' processing effort undertaken by the addressee leads him/her to infer further content from it (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 220). Thus, as Huang (2015: 85) notes, if the

system allows for Y (e.g. *long way*) and XY (e.g. *very long way*) structures but an XX pattern (e.g. *long long way*) is used instead, the addressee will assume that the speaker is being co-operative and that the XX pattern (i.e. *long long way*) is informative and means something different from what the X and YX structures convey (cf. also Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 143).

The three types of meanings or explicatures that have been consistently associated with lexical repetition in the literature (cf. Rossi 2011: 157) are as follows:

Absoluteness/Identity

In these cases, lexical repetition is used to ‘focus the denotation of the reduplicated element on a more sharply delimited, more specialized, range’ (Ghameshi et al. 2004: 308; see also Finkbeiner 2014: 190; Hohenhaus 2004: 301ff.; Stolz et al. 2011: 463). Consider, for instance, cases such as (1) and (2) below, where lexical repetition is to be understood as specifying a ‘proper’ or ‘core’ example of what a coffee or a French national should be like.

(1) I want a *coffee coffee*. (Rossi 2011: 148; Wierzbicka 1991: 267)

(2) Is he *French* or *FRENCH-French*? (Ghameshi et al. 2004: 308)

Intensification

The iteration of the lexical element conveys emphasis. While not always clearly teased apart in previous literature, two main subtypes of intensification can be distinguished, i.e. affective (i.e. it conveys speaker evaluation) and degree (i.e. it places the given property on a high point of a gradable scale). Illustrative examples of degree intensification include cases such as *the blue blue sky* (i.e. it is ‘a sky of an exceptionally intense blue colour’). Cases such as *C’est un petit petit chat* (‘it’s a little little cat’) feature both degree and affective intensification: the cat in question is ‘of a very small dimension’ (*little little*), which in turn makes it a ‘very cute’ exemplar that deserves the speaker’s affective response (Rossi et al. 2015: 352).

Expansion

This type includes instances where the repetition focuses on the chronological or spatial extension of what is being described (e.g. *Così remava, remava, e Cosimo* [...] ‘So he rowed, rowed and Cosimo [...]’, see Rossi 2011: 155).

There is not a one-to one correlation between the three explicature types and particular word-classes. However, nominal repetition is often associated with absoluteness/identity, adjectives and adverbs are not infrequent in intensifying meanings and expansion explicatures tend to be linked to the iteration of verbs.

In addition, some previous sources associate syntactic repetition (regardless of their functional type) with particular procedural implicatures² (see Rossi 2011; Rossi et al. 2015: 353; Schwarz 2007: 649). Rossi (2011: 163) for instance advocates a dual functionality of syntactic repetition, whereby the explicatures noted above (intensification / identity / expansion) are complemented by affective implicatures that enable the speaker ‘to partially orientate the interpretive process ... and thus influence the ... hearer’s beliefs’. Thus, in an example such as *my childhood is gone, gone*, Rossi (2011: 162) argues that the utterance

² Given the diachronic nature of this paper, it is worth mentioning that Traugott (2010b) opts for the term ‘inference’ rather than implicature to refer to the same phenomenon described here. For an explanation on this decision, see Traugott and Dasher (2002: 5). For accuracy’s sake, the term ‘inference’ will be used when discussing Traugott’s (2010b) claims in section 5 below.

not only provides a particular type of ideational meaning ('my childhood has passed'), but also that it conveys the speaker's (negative) appraisal ('my childhood is gone and will never be back') which in turn gives rise to a negative affective implicature ('growing old is not a desirable experience'). A follow-up empirical study (Rossi et al. 2015) provides further support to the suggestion, showing that affective implicatures are generated in significantly higher numbers for syntactic repetitive strategies than for the corresponding simplex forms. These claims have however been questioned by other scholars. Finkbeiner (2014: 196) for instance observes that conversational implicatures 'do not arise (nearly) automatically' and 'have the general property to be cancellable'. Thus, taking one of Rossi's examples as starting point, she notes that an utterance such as *I want coffee-coffee, coffee-coffee* (explicature: 'strong or "real" coffee') does not necessarily trigger a positive affective implicature ('real/strong coffee is good coffee'). Instead it may simply mean something along the lines of 'I want a coffee coffee, not because I think strong coffee is good coffee, but just because I desperately have to get awake' (Finkbeiner 2014: 196).

Moving from cross-linguistic to language-specific considerations, section 1 above briefly noted the scarce attention that syntactic repetition in general – and intensificatory repetition in particular – had received in previous literature on English (see e.g. Mattiello 2013: ch. 5; Quirk et al. 1985: 473). Indeed, most of the work on English syntactic repetition seems to have focused on the identity/ absoluteness type, often (although not exclusively) concerning nominal elements (Ghomeshi et al. 2004; Hohenhaus 2004; Huang 2009, 2015). The coverage of other types of repetition, either from a grammatical (e.g. repetition of adjectives/adverbs) or functional (cf. the types of explicature noted above) viewpoint is limited and, on many occasions, triggered by comments on syntactic repetition phenomena in other languages (e.g. see Rossi 2011; 2015 for French; Wierzbicka 1986; 1991 for Italian or Finkbeiner 2014 for German).

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 561) is perhaps the source that provides one of the most detailed descriptions of intensificatory repetition to date. They describe its semantics as similar to that of [booster³ + adjective] combinations (e.g. *a long long way* meaning 'a very long way') and indicate that, formally, adjectives entering the construction are often scalar, short and belong to 'frequent and basic' lexis. Informal registers and language addressed to children are, according to them, the most frequent domains of use of the construction – although it is also established in written prose addressed to adults.

(3) It was a **long, long** way (from Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 561)

Overall, and while very insightful, previous accounts of intensificatory (adjective) repetition in English leave room for further investigations, both synchronic and – especially – diachronic. For instance, Hohenhaus (2004: 31) and Huang (2015: 81) briefly observe that identifying repetitive constructions in English (cf. the *coffee-coffee* example in (1) above) seem to be a relatively new phenomenon (they are attested from 1970s onwards in their data). How and when the intensificatory repetitive type develops is yet to be determined. Furthermore, the discussion above briefly described two semantic subtypes of intensificatory syntactic repetition (i.e. degree and affection) highlighted by previous literature. The establishment and distribution of these patterns in English are still to be ascertained, both synchronically and diachronically. These aspects will be explored in detail in the sections below.

³ Boosters are degree adverbs that map adjectival qualities onto the upper part of a scale of 'more-or-less'. Typical examples of boosters include *very*, *highly*, *awfully* or *extremely* (Paradis 1997: 68–9).

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is corpus-based. A range of single- and multi-genre compilations, both synchronic and diachronic, were consulted.

The data for the PDE period comes from the *British National Corpus* (BNC).⁴ All instances of intensificatory (adjectival) repetition were retrieved from the spoken BNC subcorpus. However, the size of the written BNC subcorpus (*c.* 98 million words) and the general nature of the string search performed (any two-adjective strings followed by a noun; see below on retrieval protocols) precluded the possibility of scrutinizing *all* tokens of the retrieved pattern (the query yielded 311,834 hits). In order to provide as reliable a solution as possible, all (written) BNC hits were randomised and the first 15,000 examples were selected for further analysis.

Moving from present to past, the Middle English period (ME) was taken as the starting point of the diachronic investigation, as this is the period when complex premodifying NP strings (*i.e.* two or more adjectives) begin to be operative in English (see Fischer 2000; 2006; Fischer and Van der Wurff 2006). Although of course any data from previous periods of the language is by default written, care was taken to include compilations featuring text-types associated with ‘speech-oriented’ environments (*e.g.*, private letters, drama, witness depositions and trials; Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 17ff; Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013: 23; Lutzky 2012: 5).

The PPCME2⁵ was used as the main corpus for the ME period. For the EModE period, the PPCME corpus, as well as a series of genre-specific diachronic compilations were consulted (*i.e.* the *Corpus of English Dialogues* (CED),⁶ the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC)⁷ and a self-compiled corpus of EModE drama⁸ (CEMODEDRAM)). ARCHER⁹, the PPCMBE, CLMET¹⁰, the ZEN corpus¹¹ and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*¹² (CLMODEP) were used for the LModE period. *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online* was also scrutinised as it cuts across both Early and Late Modern English periods and includes

⁴ The *British National Corpus* is a 100 million-word multi-genre corpus that includes a variety of (mainly) British English written and spoken texts from the last part of the 20th century (1960s–1990s). For more information, see <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml> (3 January 2016).

⁵ The PPCME2 is part of the multi-genre diachronic corpora collection known as PENN (*Penn Corpora of Historical English*). In addition to the PPCME2 (Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, *c.* 1.2 million words), the PENN collection includes the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English* (PPCEME, *c.* 1.7 million words) and the *Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English* (PPCMBE, *c.* 1 million words). Both PPCEME and PPCMBE were also used in this investigation. For more information, see <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/> (2 January 2016).

⁶ The *Corpus of English Dialogues* is ‘a 1.2-million-word computerized corpus of Early Modern English speech-related texts’. It was compiled by Merja Kytö and Jonathan Culpeper, with the collaboration of Terry Walker and Dawn Archer (for further information, see http://www.engelska.uu.se/Research/English_Language/Research_Areas/Electronic_Resource_Projects/A_Corpus_of_English_Dialogues/), (2 January 2016).

⁷ The *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* is a 2.5 million compilation of letters from 1480 to 1680. For more information, see <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/> (2 January 2016).

⁸ The Corpus of EModE dramatists features the dramatic works of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Fletcher, Dekker, Heywood and Marlowe (3.7 million words).

⁹ ARCHER is a 3.3 million-word multi-genre corpus of British and American English created by Douglas Biber and managed by a consortium of universities. I am very grateful to David Denison, Nuria Yáñez-Bouza and Sebastian Hoffman for granting me access to its CQP web version. For further information, see <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/ARCHER/updated%20version/introduction.html> (2 January 2016).

¹⁰ The CLMET corpus is a 10 million-word multi-genre corpus covering the period 1710–1920. It was compiled by Hendrik De Smet, Hans-Jürgen Diller and Jukka Tyrkkö with a view to aiding ‘investigations of qualitative change in the history of the English language, including grammaticalisation and other types of lexico-grammatical change’. For more information, see <https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0044428/clmet> (3 January 2016).

¹¹ The ZEN is a 1.6 million-word corpus of English newspapers from 1661–1791. The corpus was compiled in the 1990s under the supervision of Udo Fries (University of Zurich). For further information, see <http://www.es.uzh.ch/en/Subsites/Projects/zencorpus.html> (3 January 2016).

¹² The corpus was constructed by David Denison with the help of Linda Van Bergen and Graeme Trousdale. It contains the private correspondence of selected British writers during the period 1861–1919. For more information, see http://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/david.denison/lmode_prose.html (3 January 2016).

‘real’ language practices of the past (witness depositions and trials; see <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/01/huber/>). The size of these diachronic corpora was in all cases manageable enough to allow a manual scrutiny of all tokens retrieved by the concordance tools (Wordsmith5, and CQPweb).

All corpora included POS-tagged versions of the materials. My datasets were consequently retrieved through a POS-tag search for two-adjective combinations (either [*_JJ *_JJ] or [*_AJ0 *_AJ0]). Only examples of two tokens of the same adjective followed by a noun (e.g. *long long way*) were (manually) selected for analysis. Cases where the [ADJ ADJ] string was not followed by a noun (see (4) and (5) below) were recorded but kept as a separate dataset for comparative purposes (see comments in section 5 below).

(4) Mark It’s only cos I’m handsome debonair suave sophisticated and fucking <pause>
dead horny and hunky. <-|-> And they’re all **jealous jealous**. (BNC, KDA 5151)

(5) ocean to scuds of foam when he’s cross. Manjiku’s **pale pale**, he can’t bear the light of the sun. (BNC, G0S 1067)

Other examples omitted from the tally included:

– instances where the repetition of the adjective is the result of the speaker’s hesitation or re-formulation. These cases mainly affected the spoken PDE data.¹³ Although some tokens were difficult to categorise and were therefore automatically excluded (on this, see Biber et al. 1999: 1056), relevant examples could normally be identified through careful listening to the BNC audio recordings (where available); transcription indicators such as pauses or fillers (see examples (6) and (7) below) or co- and con-textual indicators. See for instance example (8), where the (reformulated) use of a moderator such as *fairly* renders any intensificatory use of *high high* unlikely and suggests instead the speaker’s spontaneous repetition of the adjective.

(6) then, we’d, by then we’d had some American weapons come, one was the Browning automatic which is a very very **good [pause] good** er weapon. (BNC F8P137)

(7) But under different erm **different different** er regimes. (BNC, FXR1580)

(8) It’s it’s **fairly ha– fairly high high** standard isn’t it? (BNC, G4X2047)

– cases where the two repeated tokens in the string belong to different constituents and/or perform different functions within the NP. In example (9) below, for instance, the first token of *true* is the subject complement of the copula verb *be*, whereas the second belongs to the subject of a separate clause (as premodifier of the head noun). In (10), *old fart* is a separate unit, a subjective compound which is further premodified by the epithet *old* (on subjective compounds, see Ghesquière et al. 2013):

(9) Ancient Tis **true, true Souldiers** do: but you are Tauern-rats.
(Rowley and Middleton, *A March at Midnight*)

(10) Yeah, but you know he’s an old, I mean you know the guy he’s quite an **old, old fart** basically he likes to be looked after. (BNC, JN6256)

¹³ In the written domain any linguistic feature is, as previous scholars have noted, the result of careful planning and therefore unlikely to contain any ‘meaningless’ cases of repetitions or reformulations. Communication between writer and audience is made ‘in absentia’ and therefore these ‘non-fluency’ features (in e.g. dialogic fictional contexts) are normally meaningful and clearly marked by punctuation for the interpretative benefit of the reader (Culpeper and Kytö 2010: 145; see also Short 1996: 177).

A detailed analysis of the selected data will be provided in section 4 below. Two other issues should be noted before moving into the analysis. Firstly, the perceptive reader will have noticed that some of the examples above include a comma between the iterated elements and some other cases do not. While orthographical differences might have an effect on the use and interpretation of the repetitive examples explored here, the nature of the data considered in this paper makes any systematic exploration of the issue inviable. The BNC spoken data does not always include an audio option that would allow a comparison between the transcription and the original utterance. As regards the diachronic data, it has been pointed out by previous scholarship that the settling of orthographic marks (or accidentals) is, up until the end of the 19th century, the responsibility of printers/editors and compositors; cf. Lennard 1991:8ff; Parkes 1993:53). Therefore, inconsistencies and discrepancies across texts (as reflective of different process of text production and edition, as well as of possible keen authorial intervention) would seriously compromise the validity of any differences that may have been found.

Secondly, the patterns considered here feature the combination of two adjectives. Different functional models have been put forward in the literature to account for the variety of adjective types; in the following sections, however, Dixon's (1982)¹⁴ semantic adjective typology will be used. It distinguishes seven main adjective types which can be organised in a continuum from more-to-less subjective denotations (note the order of the following list): i.e. VALUE (e.g. *good*), DIMENSION (e.g. *big*); PHYSICAL PROPERTY (e.g. *hard*); SPEED (e.g. *fast*); HUMAN PROPENSITY (e.g. *kind*); AGE (e.g. *old*); COLOUR (e.g. *red*). Thus, VALUE adjectives are the most subjective or speaker-oriented types because they encode a property based on the speaker's viewpoint (e.g. *a nice man*, *a great movie*). At the other end of the spectrum, 'colour' adjectives constitute the most objective category, as the property they attribute to the nominal referent can be externally verified (e.g. *a red car*, *a yellow dress*; for further information on (inter)subjectivity, see section 5).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Present-day English

As indicated in the Methodology, the data for the PDE period comes from the BNC. 150 tokens of the [ADJ ADJ N] pattern were found in the spoken subcorpus (14.4 tokens / million words). The randomised, selective search of the 15,000 written BNC examples noted in section 3 above yielded 21 tokens of the same pattern.

Table 1 summarises the adjective types recorded in the data (figures in brackets represent raw no. of tokens per adjective/noun). As the table shows, VALUE (*lovely*, *wicked*, *great*), PHYSICAL PROPERTY (*heavy*, *wet*, *hot*), HUMAN PROPENSITY (*subtle*, *tough*, *naughty*) and DIMENSION adjectives (*tiny*, *big*, *long*) seem to be most frequent overall. Both adjective types and nominal heads (a balanced distribution of abstract and concrete nouns) are rather similar across the written and spoken BNC sub-corpora. This is not surprising, as almost half of the total number of the intensificatory repetitive tokens attested in the written BNC (10 examples, 48% of the tokens) appears in "spoken" practices such as fictional dialogue. Furthermore, the data show that some of the most frequent adjectives (i.e. *long* and *old*) create relatively fixed patterns with their nominal heads in the spoken data; e.g. *old*, *old* often combines with *story* or *saying*; whereas *long*, *long* seems to be noticeably preferred with the nouns such as *time* or *way* (see Table 1).

¹⁴ Dixon (2005) offers an updated classification with some new adjectival categories. The earlier (1982) typology will however suffice for the purposes of the present analysis.

Table 1. Intensificatory repetition: PDE patterns (BNC)

Spoken BNC Iterated ADJ + noun pattern		Written BNC Iterated ADJ + noun pattern	
Adjective	Noun	Adjective	Noun
Young (×3)	<i>Business/couples/lady</i>	Blue	<i>Sky</i>
Bad (×2)	<i>Ache/form</i>	Big (×3)	<i>Name/club/voice</i>
Big (×14)	<i>Asylum/change/bag/compound/cross/ cut-off/deal/hotel/house/money(×2)/ nose/one/trouble</i>	Great (×3)	<i>Moment/sadness/bridge</i>
Brilliant	<i>Play</i>	High	<i>Bridge</i>
Cheap (×2)	<i>Holiday/interior</i>	Lovely	<i>House</i>
Easy	<i>Purchase</i>	Old (×3)	<i>Time/man/woman</i>
Filthy (×2)	<i>Face/letter</i>	Poor (×5)	<i>Thing/Husband/Nicolo/Donald/man</i>
Fine	<i>Limits</i>	Terrible	<i>Dream</i>
Good (×3)	<i>Appointment/value/choice</i>	Tiny	<i>Fluttering</i>
Great (×7)	<i>Believer/bloke (×2)/shot/move/save/success</i>	Wicked	<i>Smile</i>
Hard	<i>Frost</i>	Wild	<i>Women</i>
Heavy (×3)	<i>Car/pimping/work</i>		
High (×4)	<i>Benefit/expenses/prices/wages</i>		
Hot	<i>Plate</i>		
Little (×15)	<i>Bit/eggs/lady/laugh/ones/operation/ ornament/pair/peg/pegs/Peugeot/pictures/ pins/three/toilet</i>		
Long (×33)	<i>Conversation/pieces/shot/street/ string/time(×16)/trains/way(×9)/while(×2)</i>		
Lovely (×6)	<i>Book/boys/lanes/people/things/tractor</i>		
Low (×2)	<i>Marks/prices</i>		
Major	<i>Factors</i>		
Narrow	<i>High street</i>		
Naughty (×2)	<i>Boy/daddy</i>		
New (×3)	<i>Girls/hat/ticket</i>		
Nice (×4)	<i>Family/gesture/tracksuit/unit</i>		
Old (×9)	<i>Charm/chestnut/hat/saying(×2)/story(×4)</i>		
Pink	<i>Flowers</i>		
Poor	<i>Peter</i>		
Quick (×2)	<i>Water/ change</i>		
Rough	<i>Figures</i>		
Serious	<i>Action</i>		
Shakey	<i>Shelley</i>		
Short	<i>Back</i>		
Subtle	<i>Comment</i>		
Terrible (×2)	<i>Mess/trouble</i>		
Tough	<i>Beast</i>		
Tiny (×4)	<i>Portion/ringlets/sense/thing</i>		
Vast (×2)	<i>Differences/majority</i>		
Wee	<i>Ones</i>		
Wet	<i>Object</i>		
White	<i>Coat</i>		
Whole (×2)	<i>Thing/time</i>		
Wonderful (×2)	<i>Thing/work</i>		
Wrong	<i>Item</i>		
Young (×3)	<i>Business/couples/lady</i>		

Section 2 briefly mentioned a distinction between two (sub)types of intensificatory repetition, i.e. degree and affection (see e.g. Rossi et al. 2015). Intensification of degree is the most frequent of the two sub-types, with 65 per cent of the BNC tokens overall. As noted by Huddleston & Pullum (2002), the semantic import of this intensificatory subtype is often that of boosters. An illustrative example is given in (11) below, where *quick quick* can be paraphrased as a [booster + adjective] combination (i.e. ‘very quick’).

- (11) If you're feeling okay look, you have a, get started on those and I'll help you get a **quick quick** change. (BNC, KBW6356)

The BNC data however show that degree intensificatory patterns also feature maximizer readings. Like boosters, maximizers provide specification of degree. However, differently from boosters, maximizers situate the property that they modify in the uppermost point of a degree scale (e.g. *totally, completely, utterly*; Paradis 1997: 47ff, 77). Consider (12) below. The repeated use of *whole* does not entail that *the thing* can be seen 'to a high degree' but rather indicates its *total* vision. This means that the iconic intensification achieved by the repetition of *whole* indicates intensification of absoluteness. Admittedly, these examples are not very frequent in the data (3 examples overall), however, they do attest to the wider range of meanings that repetitive (degree) intensification can convey in the PDE.

- (12) One may nevertheless query the exit goes on there, well done, let's turn it round and see the **whole, whole** thing, there you are, there's a great big picture of [unclear] with his tail falling off, there we go (BNC, KBH5705)

Affective intensification (30% of the examples overall) is, in the BNC data, normally conveyed by the iteration of VALUE adjectives. Consider for instance (13), where *poor, poor* is not emphasizing the 'great degree' of poverty that the speaker attributes to her interlocutor, but rather highlighting her (the speaker's) feelings towards the addressee. Similarly, *great great* in (14) signals the speaker's admiration of a 17th century composition.

- (13) [...] 'Of course you don't want more jewellery, you **poor, poor** thing,' Sadie Hawthorth told her with feeling (BNC, FPH3889)
- (14) Have you come across him? A seventeenth-century libertine who wrote excellent satirical verse (he's the author of the famous epigram about Charles II ... one of the reasons I like him so much is that allegedly he recited it extempore to the king) and some **great, great poems** about sex. (BNC, HTG456)

Some ambiguous cases featuring both degree and affection are also found in the data (10 tokens, see table 2). These normally feature the iteration of DIMENSION adjectives such as *big* or *little* in cases where they map onto both a physical ('size') and a metaphorical scale ('importance'). In (15) below, for instance, the iteration of *little little* emphasizes both the small-scale nature of the operation undergone by Mike (*little* in its dimensional sense) as well as the speaker's negative appraisal of it as insignificant and worthless (*little* in its affective sense).

- (15) Margaret Yeah.
 Madge what they're doing <-|-> is like <-|->
 Jane <-|-> What's that?
 Madge people like Mike
 Margaret Mm.
 Madge who've had that **little, little** operation like <-|-> that <-|->
 Margaret <-|-> Yeah.
 Madge they're clearing the waiting list
 Jane Mm. (BNC KCG674)

The distribution of intensificatory repetition across functional subtypes is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Intensificatory repetition: functional distribution in PDE (BNC)

	Affection	Ambiguous (affection/degree)	Degree	Total [tokens/PMW]
Written BNC	10 (48%)	—	11 (52%)	21 (100%) [0.23]
Spoken BNC	41 (27%)	10 (7%)	99 (66%)	150 (100%) [14.4]

Note: Figures in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

Moving from functional to stylistic matters, previous literature has commented on the frequency of intensificatory repetition in ‘children’s stories and language addressed to children’ (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 561). The analysis of the BNC data suggests a somewhat more varied distribution (see table 3).

Table 3. Intensificatory repetition: genre distribution in PDE (BNC)¹⁵

Domain	Genre (as provided in the BNC)	Tokens
Spoken	<i>Business communication</i>	17 (11%)
	<i>General conversation, adults</i>	76 (51%)
	<i>General conversation, adult-children/ children-children</i>	4 (3%)
	<i>Oral history projects</i>	18 (12%)
	<i>TV/radio broadcast</i>	20 (13%)
	<i>Education (lectures/seminars)</i>	15 (10%)
Total Spoken		150 (100%)
Total Written	<i>Prose fiction</i>	17 (80%)
	<i>Biographies</i>	2 (10%)
	<i>Newspaper</i>	2 (10%)
Total		171 (100%)

In the spoken domain, for instance, the largest percentage of tokens appears in adult-to-adult informal conversations. In written texts, prose fiction appears to be the most frequent domain of use (but note again the preference for the construction to appear in the fictional dialogic environments).

Finally, section 2 recorded previous literature’s discrepancies concerning the systematic operation of affective implicatures on the different explicatures conveyed by syntactic repetition (i.e. intensification / identity / expansion). In the BNC data examined here, affective implicatures are generally operative in examples where the iterated element is a value adjective and the speaker engages in the description and appraisal of products and/or experiences. Consider examples (16) and (17) below, where the iteration of *great* and *hard* conveys the speaker’s emphatic evaluation of, respectively, a football match action and a past living experience. Note, however, that in these cases the explicatures are intrinsically evaluative, and therefore affective implicatures may be naturally derived from them.

- (16) That was a **great great** left footed shot and could have got a nasty deflection, it’s luckily for Shrewsbury it went straight through everybody and er over for a goal kick. (BNC, KN2545)

¹⁵ In addition, the data record 17 examples of adjectival repetitive patterns in absolute/identity functions. Given that the focus of this paper is intensificatory (adjective) repetition, no analysis of these 17 examples will be given.

- (17) PS2UY And what about your mother, when she worked at the the white fish station?
 Kitty Well i think she'd go off early in the morning and then would come home about teatime. they'd take a piece with them and that was all they had to sustain them the whole day. Oh it was **hard hard** times. It's a wonder that they were as fit as they were (BNC, HEC104)

When the intensificatory repetition is created by adjectives other than VALUE types, the data do not clearly show the trigger of affective implicatures *per se*. Consider now (18)–(20) below. In (18) *vast vast* attests to the speaker's personal observations on life before and after the war – but the construction does not implicate that such differences are positively or negatively evaluated. Similarly, in (19) and (20) below, the meaning conveyed by *wet wet / little little* simply foregrounds semantically a quality of the object under consideration. Overall, then, one may conclude that PDE syntactic adjective repetition (at least of the intensificatory kind), does not necessarily convey affective implicatures, although these latter can be generated depending on the context (cf. also Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 143).

- (18) PS2A1 Did erm did you notice any great differences when you came back from the war?
 Laurie Oh <-|-> **vast vast** differences <-|->
 PS2A1 <-|-> To the, to the <-|->
 Laurie er yes. Oh **vast** differences. My first experience in going into tramcars er in, in Edinburgh anyway and I suppose that the same thing would have happened er in any country, <unclear> just gone through the ravages of war, with blackouts and so forth. The people from the highest paid to the lowest paid were all just one unit. (BNC, GYU170)
- (19) Toby Water, okay. Brush and water that'll do. Okay, right so we've cleaned it, now what we gonna do?
 Unknown sp. <unclear> put it in <unclear> (...)
 Toby Yeah we're gonna have to dry it first, okay. We've got a **wet wet** object.
 Unknown sp. <laugh>.
 Toby Right okay. (BNC, FML80)
- (20) Eggs were twenty four a shilling, **little little** eggs, looked like bullet eggs, came from Egypt. (BNC, FXY 253)

4.1.1. Concluding remarks

Overall, the analysis provided above supports and further expands previous literature's accounts of intensificatory syntactic repetition in PDE. The results confirm the association between intensificatory repetition and informal, spoken-based domains as well as they show the (quantitative) pre-eminence of the degree intensificatory (sub)type over the affective one. Furthermore, in line with recent typological literature (Finbeinker 2014), a qualitative examination of the examples indicates that any univocal correlation between intensificatory (adjective) construction types and affective implicatures cannot be supported.

The analysis above also refines and expands previous accounts of intensificatory repetition. Firstly, it shows that repetitive affective intensification is a well-established option in Present-day English, even if not the most frequent (as noted above, 30% of the tokens overall). Secondly, it demonstrates that the degree intensificatory subtype in English is semantically more versatile than has previously been suggested: while previous literature standardly

associates it with booster-like semantics (i.e. *very* + adjective), the corpus data shows that maximizer ('absolutely, totally') readings can also be obtained from it.

4.2. *Intensificatory repetition in English: a historical account*

4.2.1. *Middle English*

Only two examples of intensificatory repetition (1.7 tokens/million words) are found in the PPCME2 corpus. This may not be altogether surprising if we bear in mind that previous literature dates the development of two-adjective string patterns in English to the *late* ME period (Fischer 2006). Both tokens convey degree intensification and are attested in early religious written texts (M1; 1150-1250; see (21) and (22) below). In (21) the pattern appears in an apostrophe (an invocation of God). In this context, the emphasis provided by the repetition of *holy* is more affective than scalar: the iteration of *holy*, *holy* indeed indicates God's 'great holiness'; however, the scalarity is, in this context, pragmatically redundant (nobody is 'holier' than God Himself) and instead the expression works as an attitudinal, politeness marker that indicates the speaker's deference and submissiveness to his/her addressee. In example (22) the repetition of *sweet* conveys degree intensification (i.e. 'very sweet smell/vapour').¹⁶

- (21) *and se eadige Mildce hire astrehte sone teforen gode and þus sæde: 'Hali, hali lauerd, haue are and milce of Adame, ðine forgilte manne.* (CMVICES1,115.1395)
'The blessed Mercy prostrated herself immediately before God and thus said: "**holy, holy** Lord have pity and compassion of Adam, your sinful man"

- (22) *and wipede hes þer after mid hire faire here and mid hire muðe custe. and þarafter smerede þa warð þat hus al ful of þe swote swote breðe* (CMTRINIT,145.1950).
'And wiped it thereafter with her beautiful haircloth and kissed [it] with her mouth and thereafter smeared it [with ointment]. Then was that house full of the **sweet sweet** smell/vapour'.

4.2.2. *Early Modern English*

As in ME, adjectival syntactic repetition in EModE is relatively infrequent (about 5 tokens per million words). The highest number of tokens appears in speech-like and speech-purposed genres; i.e. drama (see the CEMODEDRAM data) and (less frequently) private letters and fictional dialogue (see the CEEC, PPCME data).¹⁷ By contrast, speech-based genres such as trials and witness depositions do not record any example of the pattern (cf. the lack of tokens in *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* in Table 4).

Two explanations can be put forward to explain the difference. First, as Culpeper & Kytö (2010: 302) note, speech-based written records (such as witness depositions) tend to be logged in formal situations where the focus lies on the ideational function of communication. Linguistic material conveying interpersonal information (e.g. hedges or, in this case, syntactic repetitions) may, in these contexts, be considered 'noise' and therefore omitted in order to aid the accuracy of the 'real-time' speech-to-writing transfer. Another possible explanation is that the difference between genres is indicative of register variation: syntactic repetition may indeed be related to informal communicative environments and hence alien to formal contexts such as those recorded in *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*.

¹⁶ Unless stated otherwise, the translations of the corpus examples are mine.

¹⁷ On the difference between speech-related/-based/-purposed genres, see Culpeper and Kytö (2010: 17–18).

Table 4. Intensificatory repetition: patterns in EMODE

Corpus	Iterated adjective	Noun	Tokens/ [tokens/PMW]
PPCEME	Holy Long	<i>Thursday</i> (×2) <i>Letter</i>	3 [1.5] (8%)
(CED) ¹⁸	–	–	–
CEEC	Dear (×4) Little (×2)	<i>Child/love/heart/brother</i> <i>Love/labour</i>	6 [2.7] (14%)
CEMODEDRAM	Dear (×4) Fine Gentle (×2) Good (×4) Miserable (×2) Monstrous (×2) Poor Pretty Sweet (×6) Wicked Rare Grand Little (×4) True Merry	<i>Win /Love/lord/land</i> <i>Apples</i> <i>Friend/Gerard</i> <i>Dorothy/Michael/My lord/Nurse</i> <i>Men/Soul</i> <i>Villaines</i> <i>Mouths</i> <i>Pledge</i> <i>Abi/Rugio/babes/lips/joy/token</i> <i>World</i> <i>Altar</i> <i>Horne</i> <i>Grave/drop/ pleasure/ meat/</i> <i>Sorrow</i> <i>Noise</i>	32 [8.5] (78%)
Old Bailey (EMODE)	–	–	–
Total			41 [5.1] (100%)

Note: Figures in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

As reflected in the Table 4, CEMODEDRAM is the compilation with the highest number of repetitive intensificatory tokens. The analysis and discussion of examples below will consequently be based on its data, although mention of the examples obtained from the other corpora will be made in due course. Looking first at the adjectives that populate the intensificatory pattern, the great majority of types (and tokens) are VALUE (e.g. *dear*, *good*, *fine*) and HUMAN PROPENSITY adjectives (e.g. *gentle*, *merry*). As regards the nominal heads that they modify, almost half of the examples (15 examples, 47%) are cases of either common nouns describing human entities and social relationships (e.g. *Lord*, *nurse*, *child*) or names (*Abigail*, *Rugio*, *Win*). This adjective-noun distribution is clearly indicative of the context in which syntactic repetition is most frequently found in EModE: as part of a term of address which is often used either as an apostrophe (invocation of God, humans or supernatural beings not present in the context, see (23)) or as a vocative in drama (see (24) and (25)):

- (23) John Falstaff What a Herod of Jewry is this! **O wicked, wicked world!** one that
is well-nigh worn to pieces with age, to show himself a young
gallant! (Shakespeare, *Merry Wives*, II, i)

Terms of address have been associated with textual and interpersonal functions in previous literature. At the most immediate (text-based) level, they make explicit the socio-personal relationships among speakers. At the wider (and in this case literary) level, they

¹⁸ There were three examples of intensificatory repetition in the drama part of the corpus. These examples were also attested in CEMODEDRAM and had to be discarded from the (CED) tally in order to avoid duplication of examples.

are a useful tool of characterisation (Culpeper 2001: 193), guiding the reader towards the identification of characters and/or marking transitions in the work. The addition of an adjective (as epithet) to terms of address performing (in)vocative functions enhance their interpersonal value in two main ways. First, it can contribute to the construction of social structure (i.e. the speaker-addressee social relation). For instance, the addition of *Good, good* to the term of address *my lord*, targets the hearer's positive face in an social relationship where the speaker is the social inferior (cf. examples (24) and (25) below). Secondly, epithets can also foreground the conveyance of affective meanings (e.g. *Dear, dear love* signals intimacy and sentimental attachment between the interlocutors; Busse 2006: 212ff).

In keeping with Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1995: 555ff), Busse's (2006: 213) work highlights the importance of 'address behavior in EModE' and suggests that 'the similarities between letters and drama ... alerts the analyst to some kind of EModE "core" vocabulary used either as heads or epithets within vocatives'.¹⁹ More crucially for the purposes of the present investigation, the adjectives in the repetitive intensificatory patterns retrieved in CEMODEDRAM closely mirror the 'common core' of epithets that previous literature has conventionally associated with terms of address in the EModE period (cf. the list of 'core' epithets in EModE in footnote 19 and the references provided there). Some examples from Shakespeare's plays are examined in more detail in (24) and (25) below.

- (24) i. Isabella To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him!
He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves? **Good, good my lord**, bethink you;
Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it.
[...]
- ii. Angelo [Aside] She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense, that my sense breeds with it. Fare you well.
- Isabella **Gentle my lord**, turn back.
- Angelo I will bethink me: come again tomorrow.
- Isabella Hark how I'll bribe you: **good my lord**, turn back.
- Angelo How! bribe me?
- Isabella Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you.
- (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, II, ii)

Blake (2002: 281) observes that inverted epithet-determiner order in terms of address (e.g. *good my lord* rather than *my good lord*) is used in Shakespeare when a speaker requests a hearing or aims at attracting the sympathy of his/her interlocutor—who is normally a social superior. This is precisely the situation we encounter in (24): the formula *Good my lord* is used by Isabella in (24i) to try to persuade Angelo (the Duke's deputy regent in Vienna) not to execute her brother. In this context, the repetition of *good* is used to enhance the interpersonal, affective force of Isabella's initial vocative ([*good* [*good my lord*]]). Note, in this respect, than when her plea partially succeeds (Angelo tells her to return the following day for a final decision), she reverts to the standard, non-repeated, term of address (i.e. *gentle my lord*/*good my lord* in (24ii)).

¹⁹ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1995: 556 ff) record the following epithets in letter-headings in CEEC: *good, reverend, honourable, loving, kind, worshipful, trusty, beloved, singular, special, noble, worthy, honoured, dear, sweet*. Their analysis of EModE letter writing manuals provide the following additions: *careful, natural, comfortable, honest, fair, gentle, fair*. These latter are complemented by Busse's (2006: 213, fn.49) study of EModE letter-writing manuals, which includes other epithets such as *poor, pretty, grave, royal or wretched*.

Consider also (25) below. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Nurse is addressed as *good nurse* by both lovers (see (25i–ii)). However, after a meeting between the Nurse and Romeo, Juliet is keen to know what her lover has confided to the Nurse. The repetition of the epithet *good* is, in this context, part of Juliet’s (positive) face-work ([*good [good Nurse]*]), which intends to flatter the Nurse and persuade her to speak.

- (25) i. Juliet [Nurse calls within]
 I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
 Anon, **good nurse!** Sweet Montague, be true.
 Stay but a little, I will come again. (II, ii)
 [...]

 ii. Romeo And stay, **good nurse**, behind the abbey wall:
 Within this hour my man shall be with thee
 And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair; (II, iv)
 [...]

 iii. Juliet I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news:
 Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; **good, good nurse**, speak. (II, v)
 (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Overall, then, the repetition of epithets within terms of address in EModE (drama) seems to be motivated by an interest in lending new pragmatic force (emotional and persuasive emphasis – i.e. affection) to a social formula (a term of address which includes an epithet) that appears to have become rather conventionalised in contemporaneous language (at least in dramatic and epistolary contexts).

It is also worth noting here that the nominal head in Shakespeare’s affective examples is normally a *social* term of address (see examples (24) and (25) above). By contrast, those of the other –and younger– dramatist included in the CEMODEDRAM corpus often feature proper and common nouns (see (26)–(28) below). Put differently, affective repetitive patterns seem to undergo some collocational expansion of their nominal heads within the EModE period.

- (26) Isab. Can I chuse but love thee?
 Thou art my Martyr, thou hast suffered for me,
 My **sweet, sweet** Rugio. (Fletcher *Woman’s pleased*, V, ii)

 (27) Val. [...]nor have I liberty
 To come and visit her; my **good, good** Dorothy,
 You are most powerful with her [...]

 Speak now or never for me. (Fletcher, *Monsieur Thomas*, IV, vii)

This collocational expansion may in turn have strengthened the establishment of the repetitive degree subtype, as when VALUE epithets (e.g. *sweet, good, gentle*) combine with inanimate nouns, the interpretation of the intensificatory pattern is ambiguous between affection and degree meanings. Consider, for instance, (28) below: as a VALUE adjective, *sweet* conveys the speaker’s appraisal of the ladies’ lips. At the same time, its syntactic repetition increases the degree of the expressed affection (‘very sweet’). These suggestions need to be however taken as tentative due to the limitations of the data.

- (28) Mono.
 Gentlewomen I stayed for a most happy wind, and now the breath from your **sweet, sweet lips**, should set me going: good mistris Honisuckle; good mistris Wafer, good mistris Tenterhooke, I will pray for you (Dekker, *Westward Hoe*, I, i)

Finally, the data analysis also record clear cases of repetitive degree intensification (8 tokens, see examples (29) and (30) below). In half of these cases, the iterated adjective is established earlier in the text (see (29)) thus suggesting that the degree meaning ‘scales up’, contextually, from a given adjectival quality. Out of the two types of degree intensification identified in the PDE data, (i.e. booster and maximizer), all EModE examples feature the booster type.

- (29) King Richard II What must the king do now? must he submit?

[...]

I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,

My gorgeous palace for a hermitage, [...]

And my **large** kingdom for a **little** grave,

A **little little** grave, an obscure grave;

Or I'll be buried in the king's highway

(Shakespeare, *Richard II*, III, iii)

- (30) Ande. No by my trat la, but me loua musha musha merymant:
Come Madam, prea-artely stand still, and letta mee
feele you: dis horne, O tis prettie horne, dis be facile, easie for
pull de vey, but Madame dis O be **grand, grand** horne, difficill,
and very deepe, tis perilous, a grand Laroone. (...)
(Dekker, *Comedie of Old Fortunatus*, V, i)

As recoded in Table 4, nine examples of repetitive intensification are attested in the other EModE corpora consulted for this investigation; i.e. six tokens in CEEC and three instances in the PPCEME corpus. The distribution of these examples does not vary substantially from the CEMODEDRAM data discussed above. In CEEC, the iterated terms are the VALUE adjective *dear* (in the context of a term of address, see (31) below) and *little*, which is in this case, also a VALUE adjective (see (32) below, where *little little* aims to undermine the speaker's love for the addressee). The PPCEME examples appear in personal correspondence (1 example) and informal fictional dialogue (i.e. the chapbook *Shakespeare's Jest book: A hundred mery talys*, 1526; see example (33) below).²⁰ All examples feature affective semantics.

- (31) My **dear dear** Chyld, I have received both yr father's dear letter, and yours, of the
12th of January: (CEEC, Winefrid Thimelby to Gertrude Aston, 1675)

- (32) This is but the devise I say of somm great ones who would make you beleeeve miracles
<paren> for if you do not they are halfe undonne </paren> or else of my
little little love that you knew not how to understand though I thinck you meditated
of my last words all night (CEEC, Arabella Stuart to Henry Brounke, 1572)

- (33) Then quod thys gentylman knele on your knees & say after me which knelyd dou~e
and sayd after hym as he bad hym.
Thys ge~tylman began & sayd thus.
The sone on the sonday.
The sone on the sonday quod thomas.
[...]
The **holy holy** Thursday.
The **holy holy** Thursday. (PPCEME, MERRY TAL-E1-P2,66.99)

²⁰ As Culpeper and Kytö (2010: 36) note, chapbooks are ‘part of oral literature... [t]hey are all relatively short tales, passed down by generations.’

Table 5. Intensificatory repetition: functional distribution (EModE)

	Affection	Ambiguous (Affection-cum-degree)	Degree	Total [tokens/PMW]
CEMODED	18 (56%) [4.7]	6 (19%) [1.5]	8 (25%) [2.1]	32 (100%) [8.5]
CEEC	6 (100%) [2.7]	–	–	6 (100%) [2.7]
PPCEME	2 (66%) [1.1]	–	1 (34%) [0.6]	3 (100%) [1.5]
Total	26 (63%) [3.2]	6 (15%) [0.8]	9 (22%) [1.1]	41 (100%) [5.1]

Note: Figures in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

The overall distribution of examples across functional (sub)types of intensification in EModE is provided in Table 5. As opposed to the PDE data in section 4.1., affective intensificatory patterns in EModE are substantially more frequent than the degree ones (63% of the total number of examples).

Other cases featuring the repetition of two (or more) instances of the same adjective are also attested (67 tokens; see examples (34) and (35) below). These examples were not considered further, not only because the relevant adjectives did not function as nominal premodifiers, but also because they form units where it is difficult to decide whether we have cases of purposeful iteration (e.g. *quick*, *quick or good*, *good* meaning ‘very + quick/good’) or simply the isolated repetition of the adjectives (compare (35i) and (35ii)). Usual adjectives in these contexts are *good*, *true*, *quick* and *excellent*.

- (34) Tob. I feel his talents through me,
‘Tis an old haggard devil, what will he do with me?
Wil. Let me kiss thee first, **quick, quick**.
(Fletcher & Shirley, *The Night Walker*, II, ii)

- (35) i. Clown. You know where you hear it, Mum, here’s your tale and your tales Man.
Gent. **Good, good**, proceed. (Heywood, *Fortune By Land And Sea*, III, iv)
ii. SORD. O rare! **good, good, good, good, good!** I thanke my Starres(. . .)
(Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humour*, I, iii)

4.2.2.1. Concluding remarks

Although still infrequent, adjectival syntactic repetition seems to have become slightly more numerous in EModE (5.1 tokens/million words as opposed to 1.7 in ME). In line with the PDE data analysed in 4.1, two main intensificatory sub-patterns can be distinguished: one which foregrounds the intensification of affection and is particularly associated with terms of address, and one which conveys degree intensification (often in combination with inanimate nouns). The frequency of the first (affective) type is higher than the second (degree) overall, which in turn may suggest the diachronic prevalence of affective repetition over its degree counterpart. In this respect (and although more data will be needed to confirm this suggestion), combinations of intrinsically subjective VALUE adjectives and common inanimate nouns may have helped to strengthen the development of the degree repetitive subtypes, as in these cases both affective and degree meanings can be obtained.

More importantly, the results indicate that intensificatory syntactic repetition may, at this point in time, be a pragmatic-only phenomenon. Thus, as regards the affective intensificatory repetition, the left-most adjective of the repetition appears to be added as a reinforcement to an already established construction (i.e. a term of address; e.g. [*good* [*good my lord*]]; [*dear* [*dear*

name]/]). In the case of the degree (sub)pattern, half of the examples feature the establishment of the adjective as ‘given’ information in the discourse before the repetition occurs.

An important aspect to bear in mind in this respect is the nature of the data that has been examined. Most of the examples come from literary dramatic sources which, even if closely related to ‘real’ spoken practices of the time, are nonetheless subject to stylistic constraints that may skew their validity as historical linguistic material. Note, for instance, that with the exception of one token (see (24)), all examples of adjective syntactic repetition in Shakespeare occur in histories and tragedies – which, in line with the stylistic conventions of the time, are written in the *GRAND STYLE* (Adamson 2001: 31ff). Furthermore, the ‘grand style’ is, as Wilson (1585: 169) notes, characterised by ‘great words, or vehement figures’ that tend to be associated with the rhetoric of rulers and kings. This is, again, highly applicable of our examples. Vocatives in the Shakespeare data are used by either royalty or noble citizens, and the intensificatory degree pattern tends to appear in monologues by the same type of ‘noble’ speakers (see e.g. example (29)). The data analysis does not record any significant style differences as regards the deployment of repetitive adjectival patterns between Shakespeare and the ‘younger’ generation of Jacobean dramatists included in the *CEMODEDRAM* corpus (even if the application of rhetorical structures (e.g. versification parameters or figures of speech) may not be as strictly observed in Jacobean drama as it was in the Elizabethan period (see e.g. Crane 1951: 33, 42ff)).

Finally, a small number of examples of adjectival syntactic repetition also appear in personal correspondence. In the main, these epistolary tokens are formally and functionally akin to the intensificatory repetitive patterns examined in the drama of the period.

4.2.3. *Late Modern English*

Five different corpora were consulted in this period. Three of them were multi-genre compilations (the *ARCHER*, the *PPCMBE* and the *CLMET*), whereas the *ZEN* and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (*CLMODEP*) contain, respectively, newspaper material and private correspondence only. No intensificatory repetition tokens were obtained from either the *ZEN* or the *CLMODEP*. Two examples were found in the *ARCHER* and the *PPCMBE* corpus, both tokens featuring a vocative construction in private correspondence (see examples (36) and (37) below):

- (36) “For God sake, my **dear dear** soul, don’t give room for their anger any more; indeed it’s of too much consequence[...].” (*ARCHER*, Lady Sarah Bunbury to Lady Susan O’Brien, 1764)
- (37) My **dear dear** Mother, forgive me for all my unkindness, forgive me for any inattention, if you are now sensible to my present feelings (*PPCMBE*, HAYDON-1808)

A substantial number of examples were retrieved from the *CLMET* corpus (159 tokens). These latter will constitute the basis of the discussion below. The *CLMET* is originally divided into 3 time subperiods: 1701–1780, 1780–1850 and 1850–1920. The data was nevertheless manually re-organised into two century-long time-slots (i.e. 1710–1800 and 1800–1900) in order facilitate the identification of possible distributional changes.

4.2.3.1. *CLMET 1710–1800*

Forty-two examples (3.3 tokens per million words) were recorded in the data. As shown in Table 6, *HUMAN PROPENSITY* and *VALUE* adjectives (e.g. *cruel*, *happy*, *sad*, *wicked*, *great*) predominate. As regards their nominal referents, the data reflect a high use of proper names and common nouns denoting humans (*Lisa*, *Pamela*, *fellow*, *master*; 52% of the tokens).

Table 6. Intensificatory repetition: patterns (18th century, CLMET 1710–1800)

CLMET 1710–800		
Iterated adjective	Noun	Tokens [Tokens/PMW]
Brave	<i>preserver</i>	42 (100%)
Charming (×2)	<i>consequence/ word</i>	[3.3]
Cruel (×6)	<i>Abbeſs/ Brother (×2)/friend/Lisa /man</i>	
Good	<i>young lady</i>	
Gracious	<i>heaven</i>	
Great (×5)	<i>deal/ miles/ sensorium/ way/ while</i>	
Happy (×8)	<i>Abenaïd/Cozro/man/Mr B/ Pamela (×2)/ youth/ days</i>	
Last	<i>courier</i>	
Little	<i>aid</i>	
Long	<i>time</i>	
Poor	<i>brother</i>	
Sad (×6)	<i>fellows/fellow/time/brother/news/scene/</i>	
Sweet (×2)	<i>Mrs Pamela/ Music</i>	
Wicked (×6)	<i>man (×4)/ wall/ master</i>	

Note: Figure in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

The two main intensificatory patterns distinguished in previous sections, i.e. affection and degree intensification, are also recorded in the data. Although the frequency of repetitive degree patterns has increased, affective uses predominate (57% of the examples; see Table 7). Also, as in the EModE period, these affective examples are closely linked to (in)vocative contexts. Examples of affective repetitive intensification are provided in (38) and (39) below. Note that the affective semantics of the adjectival iteration is further enhanced by the use of the archaic (and clearly affective) second person pronoun *thou* (in (38)) or the self-vocative (in (39)).

- (38) Why, thou inhuman fair one, what a roundeau of delights has thy caprice destroyed ! . . . the thing in the world which was most likely to happen, and which I most wished, has actually come to pass—that Charles Evelyn shou’d fall in love with Lady Juliana—**O cruel, cruel** friend, thou hast almost broke my heart. (CLMET, Griffith, *The story of Lady Juliana Harley*, 1776)

- (39) And when they were all gone but Mrs. Jervis, I said, And now, dearest sir, permit me, on my knees, thus to bless you, and pray for you. And oh, may God crown you with length of days, and increase of honour; and may your **happy, happy** Pamela, by her grateful heart, appear always worthy in your dear eyes [. . .]! (CLMET, Richardson, *Pamela*, 1740)

Degree intensification is illustrated in (40) and (41). In keeping with the EModE results, the semantics of the degree pattern is always of the booster type (e.g. *great great / sad sad* meaning ‘great/sad to a high degree’) and tends to combine with inanimate common nouns.

- (40) This comfort surely is owing to me; for if life is no worse than chequer-work, I must now have a little white to come, having seen nothing but black, all unchecked dismal black, for **a great, great while**. (CLMET, Richardson, *Clarissa*, 1748)

- (41) O my dear Miss Howe! what a **sad, sad** thing is the necessity, forced upon me, for all this preparation and contrivance! (CLMET, Richardson, *Clarissa*, 1748)

One might perhaps suggest that the repetition of a limit adjective such as *last* in (42) semantically brings the pattern close to the identifying functions noted in section 2. In this case, however, the example is very much grounded in the degree intensificatory function, as any possible ‘real’/ ‘prototypical’ reading of *last last* is discarded once the letter-writer

humorously comments on the possibility of an even later courier (*last last last*). In other words, *last last* in this case denotes a degree point on a scale whose top end is occupied by *last last last*.

- (42) Peace, I think, we must have at last, if you beat the French, or at least hinder them from beating you, and afterwards starve them. Bussy’s **last last** courier is expected; but as he may have a last last last courier, I trust more to this than to all the others. (CLMET, Walpole, *Letters*, 1735-69)

Genre and style considerations may again be invoked in order to account for the functional distribution of these tokens (see Table 7). Narrative fiction is the genre in which most of the repetitive tokens appear (83% of the examples). Seventy per cent of those narrative fiction examples (i.e. 26 tokens) belong to either key works within the Sensibility tradition (i.e. Fielding’s *A Sentimental Journey* and Richardson’s epistolary novels *Pamela* and *Clarissa*; 23 tokens) or ‘descendants’ of this literary movement (e.g. Radcliff’s gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; 3 tokens).

Table 7. Intensificatory repetition: functional and genre distribution (CLMET, 1710–1800)

Genres	Affection	Degree	Ambiguous	Tokens [tokens/PMW]
Narrative fiction	22 (63%) [3.7]	12 (35%) [2]	1 (2%) [0.2]	35 (100%) [5.9]
Narrative non-fiction	–	–	–	–
Drama	2 (66.6%) [2.9]	1 (33.4%) [1.4]	–	3 (100%) [4.4]
Letters	–	1 (50%) [0.7]	1 (50%) [0.7]	2 (100%) [1.4]
Treatises	–	–	–	–
Other	–	1 (50%) [0.6]	1 (50%) [0.6]	2 (100%) [1.2]
Total	24 (57%) [1.9]	15 (36%) [1.2]	3 (7%) [0.03]	42 (100%) [2[3.2]

Note: Figures in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

As previous scholars have observed, an overarching feature of the Sensibility movement is the arousal of pathos through conventional situations, stock characters and rhetorical devices (Todd 1986: 2). The main aim is to manipulate the readers’ emotion, inviting them to share the protagonists’ feelings (Taavitsainen 1998: 209). Those rhetorical devices include stylised uses of language to convey emphasis such as hyperboles, typographical marks (dashes, exclamations) and, most importantly from the point of view of this investigation, repetitive intensifying constructions where enumerations or lexical doublets and triplets are not infrequent (Erämetä 1951: 10; see (43)).

- (43) And thus, my dearest, dear Parents, is **your happy, happy, thrice happy Pamela**, at last, marry’d; and to who? (CLMET, Richardson, *Pamela*, 1740)

Commonplace terms used in a ‘repetitive and hyperbolic’ manner in the Sensibility tradition include adjectives such as *cruel*, *sweet*, *delicate*, *grateful*, and/or their synonymic equivalents (Todd 1986: 5). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the adjective types recorded in Table 6 (especially but not exclusively the affective ones) fit in well with this description.

4.2.3.2. CLMET 1800–1900

Syntactic repetition of premodifying adjectives becomes (relatively) more frequent in this period: 117 examples (6.3 tokens per million words) were found in the data. As Table 8

Table 8. Intensificatory repetition: patterns (CLMET, 1800–1900)

CLMET 1710–1800		
Iterated adjective	Noun	Total [tokens/PMW]
Awful	<i>Day</i>	117 (100%) [6.3]
Beautiful (×2)	<i>Lips/girl</i>	
Bitter (×2)	<i>Confession/ tragedy</i>	
Blue	<i>Sky</i>	
Brave	<i>Girls</i>	
Cruel (×5)	<i>Rawdon/things/deceivers/words/day</i>	
Cunning	<i>Man</i>	
Dark	<i>River</i>	
Dreadful	<i>Pain</i>	
Fair	<i>Face</i>	
Fond	<i>Kiss</i>	
Foolish	<i>Deer</i>	
Glorious	<i>Privilege</i>	
Golden	<i>Wheat</i>	
Good (×2)	<i>Young lady/ news</i>	
Great (×5)	<i>Love/kindness/peril/work/good</i>	
Happy (×9)	<i>Fire/Elinor/realms/night/dove/you/times/ Sunday/earth</i>	
Hard (×2)	<i>Work/cash</i>	
Heavy	<i>Head</i>	
Last (×2)	<i>Hope/look</i>	
Little (×4)	<i>Aid/bit/child(×2)</i>	
Lonely	<i>Walks</i>	
Long (×13)	<i>Time</i>	
Lovely	<i>Brocades</i>	
Old (×27)	<i>Aunt/conflict/ face/ fashion/ friend/friends/ lament/ look/ man(×4)/moods/prophecy/ seal/smile/song/stories/story(×2) /times(×4)/ tragedy/woman(×2)</i>	
Poor (×6)	<i>Brother/woman/ wench/ Arabella/ Mrs Dynes/ mother</i>	
Precious	<i>Simmun</i>	
Sad (×7)	<i>Blow/business/circumstance/anger/reputation/work/end</i>	
Sweet (×2)	<i>Child, Venetia</i>	
Terrible	<i>Thing</i>	
Tiny	<i>Shell-palace</i>	
Weary	<i>Way</i>	
Wet	<i>Cheeks</i>	
Wicked (×7)	<i>Men, Darzee, monster, father, voice, sun(×2)</i>	
Wide (×3)	<i>World, sea, eyes</i>	

Note: Figure in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

shows, noun and adjective types seem to have become more diversified (note, for instance, the greater presence of common nouns). Some of the collocations that predominate in the PDE data (e.g. *long long time*, *old old story*; see section 4.1. above) begin to be prominent in this century already.

The functional and genre distribution of the repetitive patterns are also different from those attested in the 18 century data (see Table 9). Focusing first on function, degree intensification has become noticeably more frequent than its affective counterpart (76% vs. 20%, respectively). As in previous centuries, all degree examples feature booster-like semantics (i.e. ‘very + adj’).

The data also show intensificatory degree patterns in a syntactic context not recorded in previous centuries, namely, in combination with another adjectival element in the

premodifying string (see (44) and (45)). The numbers are too low (4 examples), however, to read too much into the overall significance of the finding:²¹

- (44) No, but in honour—great, great honour! These few bad days will be forgotten soon, dearest—quite, quite forgotten. And in the future time people will come to me and say—girls, **dearest, brave, brave** girls, who are fighting the battle of life like men

(CLMET, Caine, *The Christian*, 1897)

- (45) She picked up the night-light and stole round the bed. Yes, he had decided to fall asleep. The hazard of death afar off had just defeated his devilish obstinacy. Fate had bested him. How marvellously soft and delicate that tear-stained cheek! How frail that **tiny, tiny clenched** hand! (CLMET, Bennett, *Old Wives' Tale*, 1908)

Bringing together functional and genre matters, it is worth mentioning here that affective intensification is almost exclusively attested in narrative fiction (23 out of the 24 tokens) and, like in the previous century, strongly attached to (in)vocatives and exclamative sentences (14 examples, 58% of the cases).

- (46) 'Are you sure, mamma, that nothing has been done to my head?' continued Venetia. 'Why, what is this?' and she touched a light bandage on her brow. 'My darling, you have been ill...but now I am quite happy, my **sweet, sweet** child'.

(CLMET, Disraeli, *Venetia*, 1837)

Degree intensification, as Table 9 shows, is not only quantitatively more frequent but also quantitatively more widely distributed across genres than its affective counterpart. The stylistic distribution of the intensificatory degree patterns is also more varied than in

Table 9. Intensificatory repetition: genre and functional distribution (CLMET 1800–1900)

Genres	Affection	Degree	Ambiguous	Total [tokens/PMW]
Narrative fiction	23 (26%) [2.8]	65 (72%) [7.9]	2 (2%) [0.3]	90 (100%) [11]
Narrative non-fiction	—	1 (100%) [0.4]	—	1 (100%) [0.4]
Drama	—	5 (83%) [14.8]	1 (17%) [2.9]	6 (100%) [17.7]
Letters	—	6 (100%) [7.1]	—	6 (100%) [7.1]
Treatise	—	3 (100%) [01.1]	—	3 (100%) [1.1]
Other (mainly periodicals)	1 (9.5%) [0.3]	9 (81%) [2.3]	1 (9.5%) [0.3]	11 (100%) [2.9]
Total	24 (21%) [1.3]	89 (76%) [4.8]	4 (3%) [0.2]	117 (100%) [6.3]

Note: Figures in square brackets represent normalised figures per million words.

²¹ As in the previous period, cases where syntactic adjectival patterns appear post-verbally and not syntactically related to a head noun are found. These tokens are often pragmatically non-intensifying; e.g. adjectival repetition occurs in appositions with explicatory functions (see (i)) or as response particles (see (ii)):

- (i) Rachel tried to say 'I am not,' but the words would not come. She was **jealous, jealous** of the past, cut to the heart every time she noticed that Lady Newhaven's hair waved over her ears, and that she had taper fingers (CLMET, Cholmondeley, *Red Potage*, 1899)
- (ii) 'We all know that, and ye must have a wonderful talented constitution to be able to live so long, mustn't he, neighbours?' '**True, true;** ye must, malter, wonderful,' said the meeting unanimously. (CLMET, Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 1874)

the previous century. Whereas in previous datasets all tokens were found in dialogic contexts (i.e. drama, letters, fictional conversation), in the 19th century data we begin to find examples in clear non-dialogic environments such as in third-person omniscient narration:

- (47) They were the strangest pair at such a time that ever firelight shone upon. Mr Dombey so erect and solemn, gazing at the blare; his little image, with an **old, old face**, peering into the red perspective with the fixed and rapt attention of a sage
(CLMET, Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, 1844)
- (48) He knew everything regarding her: who her father was; in what year her mother danced at the opera; what had been her previous history (...) But Becky was left with a **sad sad** reputation in the esteem of a country gentleman and relative who had been once rather partial to her. (CLMET, Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 1843)

4.2.3.3. Concluding remarks

The LModE period appears to be key in the development of intensifying repetitive structures; a period characterised by processes of both reduction and expansion. As regards reduction, the data analysis indicates that affective intensifying patterns are progressively restricted in terms of frequency, pragmatic distribution and genre across the centuries. Thus, in comparison to the previous centuries, they seem to be gradually limited to highly stylised environments (exclamations and invocations) and particular genres (narrative fiction) by the second half of the period. Degree intensification develops in the opposite direction from the 19th century onwards, i.e. gradually increasing in frequency, across genres and in varied stylistic and syntactic contexts.

5. INTENSIFICATORY (ADJECTIVE) REPETITION IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The analyses above indicate that intensificatory repetition is not a particularly frequent phenomenon either synchronically and diachronically – although it seems to gain ground from the second half of the LModE period. Compare, in this respect, the 3.3 tokens/million words of the pattern in the 18th century with the 6.3 and 14 tokens/million words in the 19th century and PDE period, respectively. The diachronic investigation also involves an ‘added bonus’ of complexity due to the limited availability of sources reflecting different registers and domains.

Intensificatory repetition is clearly associated with colloquial, spoken-related environments in Present-day English. The historical data analysed here *quantitatively* mirrors the PDE distribution, with an overall preference for repetitive patterns to appear in drama, private correspondence and dialogue in fiction. In this respect, Culpeper & Kytö (2010: 142) had observed that lexical repetitions ‘emerge in literature as a feature of involvement associated with face to face conversation, notably its spontaneity’. However, the *qualitative* exploration of the particular contexts in which repetitive patterns are attested does not provide any reliable indication that this may have indeed been the case. In EModE (the first period where a substantial number of repetitive examples are attested) no tokens are found in speech-recorded genres (although cf. the comments above on the possible omissions of the pattern in e.g. *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*). In addition, the tokens occurring in speech-based environments such as letters and drama appear to be more frequently associated with established formulae (e.g. terms of address – especially the affective repetitive types) and formal stylised contexts (e.g. monologues or ‘polite’ conversations between speakers for the degree repetitive tokens). The fact that repetition

has historically been, ‘the subject of several rhetorical figures’ may provide an explanation for this, as ‘some writers would deploy some figures, not least because of the stylistic prestige in doing so’ (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 144; see also my comments in 4.2.2 above). The (early) LModE period records a rather similar situation: highly stylised literary environments are again the main source of intensificatory repetitive structures in the 18th century. It is only in the course of the 19th century that their stylistic distribution seems to change and become more in line with the PDE situation described above, i.e. one where degree intensification prevails over the affective one, and where the value of repetition as a socio-stylistic marker is no longer operative.

More generally, the sections above show that the affective intensificatory subtype is, historically, more important than previous research has acknowledged. Although care needs to be exerted due to the limitations of the data, the quantitative results suggest that intensificatory affection seems to have been the first repetitive pattern to establish itself in the language, and that its collocational expansion from EModE onwards may have paved the way for the establishment of (repetitive) degree intensification. If further quantitative analyses were to confirm this claim, the development of intensificatory repetition would provide an interesting exception to standard trends of (inter)subjectivisation.

As noted above, subjective expressions are those which encode the speaker’s viewpoint. For instance, the meaning of *sweet* in *a sweet cake* can be considered (relatively) objective, as its quality (‘having a particular sugary taste’) can be externally verified. By contrast, *sweet* in *a sweet child* is semantically more subjective: whether a child is seen as *sweet* (‘charming, delightful’) or not very much depends on the speaker’s attitude towards children. Degree adverbs are also (interpersonally) subjective in that they convey the speaker’s appraisal of whether a particular property should be attributed to a referent to a greater (*very happy child*) or lesser extent (*slightly damaged package*).²² Intersubjectivity can be defined as the semantic codification of ‘the speaker’s awareness of the addressee’s attitudes and beliefs, specifically the latter’s “face” needs or self-image’ (Vandelanotte 2012: 213 commenting on Traugott 2010b: 32). Applying these concepts to our repetitive patterns, one may argue that affective intensification is semantically intersubjective: regardless of the period, domain (spoken/written language) and/or genre, it is consistently associated with (in)vocatives and terms of address across and it reflects the speaker’s appeal to his/her interlocutor’s face for a variety of personal reasons. By contrast, repetitive degree intensification features (interpersonal) subjectivity (their semantics is similar to that of degree adverbs; see comment above and footnote 22). Now, if, in line with Traugott (2010b: 32), subjectivity is a basic requirement for intersubjectivity, what we have in the case of repetitive intensification is a reversal of the usual *subjective* > *intersubjective* cline, with the intersubjective pattern (i.e. affective intensification) diachronically preceding the (interpersonally) subjective one (i.e. degree intensification). Further analyses are needed to substantiate this suggestion, particularly in connection to how and when the semanticisation of affection/degree meanings in the patterns described above takes place. Some suggestions can nevertheless be put forward on the basis of the results in previous sections. Grammaticalisation has been invoked as the process explaining the development of particular (non-intensificatory) repetitive constructions such as *come, come*

²² De Smet & Verstraete (2006) provide a typology of subjectivity, differentiating between IDEATIONAL and INTERPERSONAL subjectivity. Ideational subjective cases include instances where a linguistic expression encodes the speaker’s viewpoint but at the same time it still conveys ideational meaning. Interpersonal subjectivity subsumes those cases where a linguistic expression ‘merely involves positioning of the speaker with respect to a content’, without propositional meaning (De Smet & Verstraete 2006: 385). Degree adverbs are of the latter type, in that their schematic domain (degree) is foregrounded at the expense of any ideational meaning (or content domain; CF. Paradis 1997, 2000).

in English (cf. Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 153). In these cases, the original propositional meaning of the repetition (e.g. in the case of *come, come*, the addressee's locational change on the speaker's request) is bleached and develops interpersonal meanings (i.e. *come, come* to signal the addressee's 'moving away' from a former attitude or opinion). Now, whereas the intensificatory repetitive patterns explored here also increase in frequency over time, they do not seem to undergo noticeable lexical bleaching. By contrast, it is the iconic iteration of the adjectives' lexical semantics what leads to the development of an intensificatory pragmatic implicature which, over time, becomes strengthened and conventionalised as intrinsic to the semantics of the new construction (e.g. *good [good Lord] > [good good] Lord*); see Traugott and Dasher 2002: 35, Traugott 2010b: 32).

The historical corpus data examined here also provides some indications as to when affection/degree may have become semantically encoded in the repetitive pattern. In EModE, affective and degree repetitive intensification appears to be pragmatic-only. Affective instances appear in address terms where the second, leftmost adjective may be intensifying a seemingly well-established formula; e.g. *dear [dear love]*; *gentle [gentle my lord]*. In addition, half of the tokens of degree intensification are attested in contexts where the property to be intensified is previously established in discourse. It is only in the course of the 19th century that the data record repetitive examples where the unitary syntactic and semantic import of the repetition is foregrounded. Consider, in this respect, (44) and (45), where intensificatory repetition combines, as a unit, with other adjectives in a complex premodifying string. Furthermore, it is also only from the 19th century onwards that intensifying adjectival patterns begin to be attested as independent syntactic constituents within a clause. See the examples (49) and (50) where *wrong wrong* and *busy busy* function as subject complement (meaning, respectively 'very hard' and 'very busy'). The availability of audio recording for (50) example further confirms the phonological universion of the members (i.e. they constitute a single tone unit).

- (49) 'Then you do mean to stay with me?' the margravine caught him up.
 'Not in livery, your Highness'.
 'To the deuce with you!' would be a fair translation of the exalted lady's reply. She railed at his insufferable pride. 'And you were **wrong, wrong**,' she pursued. 'You offended the prince mightily: you travestied his most noble ancestor—'
 (Meredith, *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, 1870)

- (50) PS2UY Were there a lot of air raids at that time?
 Kitty Oh well there was quite a lot of warnings and whatnot but er on the whole there was a lot but no more than any other place. But oh it was **busy busy** then. (BNC HEC173)

Present-day English seems to be a period of consolidation and expansion, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, the frequency of repetitive patterns, and particularly of the degree repetitive subtype, increases significantly. On the qualitative front, the PDE period features an incipient development of the degree repetitive subtype (i.e. patterns featuring both booster and maximizer readings, see e.g. example (12)).

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the development of those patterns that Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 561) categorise as intensificatory repetition in English (i.e. the juxtaposition of two tokens of the same adjective for emphatic purposes).

The investigation shows that intensificatory repetitive patterns are attested from the ME period onwards, but that they begin to develop into fully-fledged constructions²³ in LModE. The analyses further confirm the existence of two subtypes of intensificatory repetition (i.e. affection and degree emphasis) and highlight the importance of the affective subtype both for reasons of descriptive adequacy (it has not been explored in any depth in previous literature) and because of its role in the development of the overall intensificatory construction (see below). A cautious reminder needs nevertheless to be issued: the main dataset comes from fiction and drama and, as Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 25) note, although both genres are an excellent source of historical linguistic information ‘we should bear their nature in sight... they can tell us about human interaction, but in a condensed or typified form’.

The paper also makes a number of theoretical contributions. Firstly, the analyses above show that affective intensification develops out of formulaic constructions (i.e. (in)vocatives and terms of address). Formulaic phraseology has been the focus of manifold studies exploring the origin, usage and change of particular patterns (see, among others, Hiltunen 1983; Cowie 1998; Brinton and Akimoto 1999; Knappe 2004). However, as noted by Knappe (2012: 184) ‘a promising area for future research is the study of the impact of phraseological units... on larger issues of language change’. In keeping with this idea, the sections above not only show that formulaic phraseology (i.e. terms of address) is less fixed than one may have initially expected, but also, that it can contribute to the development of fully productive constructions (in our case, by paving the way for the development intensificatory degree patterns).²⁴

In addition, the development of modifying construction of the type investigated here, i.e. cases which cut across ideational (semantics of the repeated lexical item) and interpersonal meanings (speaker’s emphasis) suggests the need for a re-evaluation of standard descriptions of the English Noun Phrase from both structural and functional perspectives. On the structural front, intensificatory constructions constitute an exception to stacking – currently considered the ‘default’ option for the syntactic organisation of modifying attributive adjectives (see, among others, Matthews 2009; 2014). From a functional perspective, their development provide support to those approaches that conceptualise the NP as a field-like structure where interpersonal meanings are scattered across the NP rather than associated with a particular slot within the premodifying string (cf. Bache 2000; Breban 2010; Ghesquière 2014). Furthermore – and also from a functional standpoint – the constructions explored are, to an extent, in complementary distribution with well-established intensifying patterns in English, i.e. the more ‘standard’ [ADV_{DEG} ADJ] type (e.g. *very happy*, *really lovely*) and another ‘minor’ [ADJ ADJ] construction with a similar schematic structure; i.e. that formed by two adjectival cognitive synonyms (e.g. *great big house* or *tiny little hamlet*). The development of ‘minor’ adjective intensifying structures does not seem to be the result of a grammatical reorganisation of the system. Yet these structures do create synsemantic overlaps

²³ In a very general sense, constructions can be defined as conventionalised form-meaning pairings [that] ... encapsulate both language-internal (semantic) and language external (pragmatic, contextual) information.’ (Bergs 2008: 128). Applying the definition to the intensificatory pattern(s) explored here, one may begin by stating the obvious, i.e. that on the formal, language-internal level, it is the iterative nature of the structure what distinguishes the construction explored here from other ADJ ADJ schematic constructional options (e.g. forms such as *great big* or *tiny little* briefly alluded to in the introduction above). As regards its functional component, it has been already noted that the iconic iteration of adjectives has been codified into explicatures (intensification), as described above. Or, as Rossi (2011: 156) puts it ‘the reduplicated structure allows them [the repetitive patterns] to convey specific content that is not equivalent to the sum of their meanings in isolation.’ The pragmatic properties of the construction seem to be heavily co-textually determined (cf. the discussion on implicatures in the sections above).

²⁴ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

with the established intensificatory patterns that are in need of further exploration, both synchronically and diachronically.

Finally, the sections above suggest a close link between the development of intensificatory adjective constructions in English and dialogic environments. Work by Traugott (2010a: 10, 21) demonstrates the potential of dialogic contexts as sites for the development of new syntactic constructions, noting however that ‘relatively little attention has been paid to dialogic contexts for changes’. This paper can therefore be taken as a timely contribution to the field, showing how dialogism operationalises language change at the NP level.

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